



Exiting The Sex Trade

Sex work in Canada

Sex work has been a prominent industry in Canada since the 1800s. Although sex work itself has never been illegal in Canada, many activities relating to the act have been outlawed. These include:

- 1) procuring or living on the avails of prostitution;
- 2) owning, operating, or occupying a bawdy house;
- 3) all forms of public communication for the purpose of prostitution;
- 4) knowingly transporting another to a bawdy house; and
- 5) purchasing sexual services from someone less than 18 years old. Statutes prohibiting some of these activities have been in place in Canada for more than 250 years.

Interacting with the people involved

When approaching a sex worker, it is important to understand that many have the desire to leave the trade, often citing stigma, harassment, violence, and discrimination as reasons for wanting to leave. However, they may still choose to stay in the trade due to financial strain. It's imperative that those who interact with sex workers in an understanding manner that is free of judgement.

Services Provided

Many diverse ideologies shape the way organizations assist sex workers as they transition out of the sex trade. Regardless of which ideology the organization chooses to follow, they should all provide access to key services. Key services include:

- Housing: Workers who are homeless or in danger of being homeless are some of the most marginalized in the industry.

- Substance Abuse: Some sex workers work in the industry to support their addictions. In these cases it is important that sex workers have access to a non-judgmental and supportive substance use service to help them lessen their dependence on sex work.
- Education: Sex trade workers often lack education
- Financial Strain: The current minimum wage does not provide individuals with the ability to lead healthy and stable lives, which only increases their reliance on sex work. Individuals involved in the sex trade may have debts and other financial obstacles, making it crucial to incorporate financial literacy into the transition process.
- Legal Difficulties: Because of the criminalized nature of sex work, some sex workers face legal barriers to transitioning out of the industry. Provision of confidential legal advice is essential.

¹ “SEX WORK Transitioning, Retiring and Exiting” By Andrei Ouspenski

² Historica Canada

Sites:

#2) http://wish-vancouver.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/SexWork-TRE-REPORT_MAY-6-2015.pdf

#2) <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/prostitution/>